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## SENATE DEMS URGE TOP REPUBLICANS ON HOUSE SPENDING PANELS TO REJECT PAUL'S CALL TO END FOREIGN AID TO ISRAEL

*In Letter to House Appropriations Chair Rogers and Budget Chair Ryan, Senators  
Seek Reassurance That Aid to Israel Will Not Be Threatened*

*Senators: A Stable Israel is Vital to Our National Security; Eliminating Aid Could  
Put U.S. at Risk*

**WASHINGTON, DC**—Today, **U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD)**, a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, along with Senators Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Bill Nelson (D-FL), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Robert Casey (D-PA), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), and Bob Menendez (D-NJ) called on the top Republicans on the House appropriations and budget committees to reject Senator Rand Paul's call to eliminate foreign aid to Israel. In an interview last week with CNN, Paul announced his support for slashing foreign aid across the board, including a zeroing out of aid to Israel.

In a letter to Rep. Hal Rogers, the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, and Rep. Paul Ryan, Chairman of the House Budget Committee, the Democratic senators criticized Paul's comments and sought reassurance that aid to Israel would not be threatened.

"These remarks are alarming and aim to weaken the decades-long bipartisan consensus on U.S. support for Israel," **the senators wrote.**

"At a time when U.S. foreign aid is being utilized to strengthen our partnerships around the world, particularly in the Middle East where our relationships are more important than ever, we urge you to commit to maintain full foreign aid funding to Israel," **the senators continued.**

**Senator Cardin** said, "There is no doubt that we need to bring our federal budget into better balance. But to short-change our national security and one of America's closest democratic allies for the sake of a balance sheet is unwise and misguided."

**Senator Stabenow** said, "We cannot turn our backs on our strongest ally in the Middle East. Our own national security and stability in the region is dependent on Israel's security, so we cannot abandon them."

**Senator Nelson said,** “Now, more than ever, Israel needs our steadfast support. This is not the time to discuss ending our assistance.”

**Senator Brown said,** "Ensuring a strong and secure Israel is about more than just maintaining stability in the region. It's also about our nation's commitment to the men and women of the region who seek peace, and a better life for their children." He continued, "During my most recent visit to Israel, I was again impressed with the long struggle for peace and security its people have endured. With political unrest across the Middle East, cutting aid to Israel could jeopardize the fragile peace we have worked so hard to maintain."

**Senator Casey said,** "Especially given the rising influence of Hezbollah in Lebanon and the continued saber-rattling from Iran, it should be unthinkable to cut aid for Israel." He continued, "U.S. aid to Israel is an investment in one of our strongest allies and in our own security."

**Senator Whitehouse said,** "Israel is a strong ally and a bastion of democracy in the Middle East. Ending US support for Israel would be irresponsible, and damaging to our national interest, and I strongly oppose any effort to do so."

**Senator Menendez said,** “Cutting off our steadfast partner and close ally in the Middle East is a recipe for a national security disaster. The recent developments in the Middle East have added uncertainty to the region’s future, which is closely tied to our security here at home. This is why we need to reaffirm our commitment to Israel, not throw it into question.”

The full text of the senators' letter to Rogers and Ryan appears below.

February 1, 2011

Dear Chairman Rogers and Chairman Ryan:

We write in light of recent statements that demonstrate the intent of certain Senators to eliminate foreign aid funding to the nation of Israel. Recently, Republican Senator Rand Paul suggested that the United States should “halt all foreign aid including its financial aid to Israel.” These remarks are alarming and aim to weaken the decades-long bipartisan consensus on U.S. support for Israel. Both Republicans and Democrats are committed to reining in the federal deficit, but assistance to Israel is not a matter of “pork barrel spending” - rather U.S. foreign aid to Israel demonstrates America’s rock-solid commitment to ensuring Israel’s right to exist.

Israel is the only democratic nation in the Middle East and one of our most trusted allies. A stable and secure Israel is strongly in our national security interest and has been a cornerstone of our foreign policy for over half-a-century. Using Congress’s bipartisan commitment to reining in government spending as a reason to abandon Israel is unacceptable and should be immediately rejected.

At a time when U.S. foreign aid is being utilized to strengthen our partnerships around the world, particularly in the Middle East where our relationships are more important than ever, we urge you to commit to maintain full foreign aid funding to Israel. As members of the United States Senate, we will work aggressively to prevent any attempts to abandon one of our most trusted allies. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Senator Stabenow  
Senator Nelson  
Senator Cardin  
Senator Brown  
Senator Casey  
Senator Whitehouse  
Senator Menendez

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